

WALTON SOCIETY BREAK SATURDAY FREE PARKING PLEDGE... AND VOTE THEMSELVES A 12% PAYRISE

The Walton Society's election manifesto last May pledged to introduce "free parking on Saturdays" and to review "the level of car park charges and the times when charges apply". As part of the Residents Associations/LibDems Coalition, the Walton Society have broken this pledge. They have though found the money to give themselves a 12.4% pay rise.

At the Full Council meeting last month, the Coalition voted to introduce **free Saturday parking** for the town/village centre car parks in Molesey, Thames Ditton, Long Ditton and Hershams - but not Walton. So while other parts of the borough will enjoy free parking from April, Walton residents won't. But we'll still have to pay the increased charges which came into effect in January. Local Conservative Cllr Andrew Kelly said "Walton residents are not second-class citizens, we pay the same Council Tax as everyone else in the borough. Yet the Walton Society are making Walton residents pay for Thames Ditton to get free parking and break their key election commitment."



The same meeting saw the RA/LD Coalition vote to give all **borough councillors a 12.4% pay rise** at your expense. This will cost taxpayers £26,200 a year. Cllr Andrew Kelly proposed to reduce the increase to just 2%, the same increase the Council's staff are getting - this was turned down by the RA/LDs. Your three Walton Society Councillors Chris Sadler, Alan Palmer and Graham Woolgar all voted to give themselves this huge pay rise at your expense. No Conservative Councillor voted for the increase. Andrew said "There is simply no argument in favour of giving councillors such a huge pay rise. Cllr Sadler spoke at length about why councillors deserved the increase but never once mentioned how it comes from the taxpayers or the difficult financial times the Council is going through, nor did he seek to explain why councillors deserve so much more than the Council's own staff. In the eight years of Conservative majority control, allowances went up just 3.5%. After just months in office, the Walton Society are getting their snouts in the trough."

Also at the December meeting your Walton Society Councillors voted for above-inflation **increases that will hit Elmsbridge's elderly and vulnerable residents** - see article overleaf.

GREEN BELT APPLICATION REFUSED

A planning application for 1,024 homes on 147 acres of Walton Green Belt land between Fieldcommon Lane, Molesey Road and the River Mole was refused at a Special Planning Sub-Committee meeting on 21 November. The plans included a primary school, doctor's surgery, shop, pub, restaurant, recreation area and public open space.

On the advice of the Council's planning officers, Councillors refused the application on four grounds - 1) inappropriate development in the Green Belt 2) not demonstrated that the transport impact could be sufficiently mitigated 3) close proximity to Weylands allocated waste site 4) insufficient information about biodiversity issues. The applicants can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. As we go to print they have yet to do so.

Elmsbridge Council in coalition control



Last May all seats on Elmsbridge Borough Council were up for election on new ward boundaries. The results across the borough were Conservatives (22 seats), Residents' Associations (RAs) (19 seats) and Liberal Democrats (7 seats). Although Elmsbridge

Conservatives received the largest number of votes, the Liberal Democrats decided to go into coalition with the RAs and together they now run Elmsbridge Borough Council.

The Elmsbridge RA group is a coalition itself, being made up of seven different RAs from across the borough, including the Walton Society (who did not bother to stand candidates in two of Walton's three wards in May). Cllr Tim Oliver, leader of Elmsbridge Conservatives, said after the coalition was formed "This mismatched marriage of convenience makes a mockery of the Residents' Association Group's frequent claims of being above party politics. At the first opportunity of taking power they have joined with the Liberal Democrats - a national political party."

Elmsbridge Conservatives have been vigorous in holding the new administration to account in the interests of Elmsbridge residents and in line with our proven commitment to sound government and value for taxpayers' money.

- Walton Conservatives won all six seats in Walton North and Walton South and together form a strong team working for all of Walton and its residents. Andrew Kelly, Alan Kopitko and Rachael Lake represent North with Chris Cross, Christine Elmer and Malcolm Howard representing South. The Walton Society won the three seats in Walton Central.

- Conservative David Munro, a long-serving Farnham councillor, defeated incumbent Independent Kevin Hurley to become Surrey's new Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) on 5 May.

YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATIVES



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Walton's Conservative Councillors hold a surgery on the first Saturday of each month (Farmers Market Day) at the Library from 10am to 12 noon. There is no need to book, so please just turn up on the day.

UPDATE FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR TONY SAMUELS

Times are tough for the Conservative administration at County Hall as money is in short supply while the bills are going up and we're having to do more with less. Government funding for Surrey's services dropped by nearly half this year and our core government grant is set to disappear by the end of the decade and to make matters worse, Surrey will be expected to contribute £17million annually into the pot. That is the equivalent of 3% on the council tax which will be going to fund services elsewhere in the country!

I have been part of the Cabinet team who have met all of the 11 Surrey MPs on this subject, as well as personally attending seminars, meetings and conferences at all hours of the day, In the meantime efficiency is the watchword and the Surrey Conservatives have successfully saved £396m from the budget since 2011.

The demand for caring for the elderly and disabled remains one of our biggest challenges. We need to spend an extra £24 million every year for this. A rapidly rising elderly population will increase by 20,000 by 2020, while at the other end of the spectrum, we face increased demand for school places. We've created 16,000 new places since 2010, but 11,000 more are needed within five years. The rising number of people with special educational needs and disabilities means we need to provide support to hundreds more children over the coming years. Funding isn't matching growing demand and there will be a £24m annual gap by 2020.

I will continue to use all of my business, legal and political experience to achieve the best solution possible for all of my residents.

COALITION INCREASES COMMUNITY CHARGES

On 7 December the Residents' Association led Elmbridge administration (which includes the Walton Society) voted to increase charges for meals-on-wheels and lunches at the Day Centres at several times higher than the rate of inflation.

It is even worse for community transport users. A single journey to a Day Centre increased by a whopping 30% from this month, and the average rise for transport is over 13%. Another service charge was also hiked by 14%.

At the January Cabinet meeting, the Coalition voted to introduce charges to use the Council's tennis courts including at Elmgrove. Cllr Andrew Kelly said "These increases and new charges, not mentioned by the Walton Society at election time, are just a money-making exercise without any thought to the effect they will have on residents."



Walton Day Centre in Manor Road

HERITAGE DAY 2016

The Walton-on-Thames Trading Alliance (Wotta), formed last year, has been organising some fantastic community events including Walton Heritage Day on 10 September. As always Walton Conservatives were there with our food and drink stall. Although the weather was not ideal, it was a great day with lots going on at the Wharf, the Riverhouse Barn and St Mary's Church.

Visit www.wotta.co.uk for more on Wotta's activities and how you can get involved.



Local MP Dominic Raab with Walton Councillors Chris Cross, Andrew Kelly and Rachael Lake at Walton Heritage Day 2016

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Elmbridge Council is currently reviewing its Local Plan which sets out how much housing should be built in the borough and where. This includes a **Green Belt Review**. The initial report recommended releasing Green Belt sites for development in Cobham and Long Ditton, but not in Walton.
- Exhibitions were held late last year for proposals for the **Birdseye site** in Station Avenue. The developers are proposing to knock down the listed building and build about 350 homes (mainly flats) and retail units in its place. We understand further exhibitions will take place this year but we are awaiting details.
- A planning application for new signage indicates Marks & Spencer will be taking over the **Aldi site** in Church Street. It also looks like the vacant restaurant unit on New Zealand Avenue is to become an Argentinean steakhouse.
- Abellio decided to resign from various **bus contracts** with effect from 31 December. Surrey County Council worked hard to arrange replacement services. These are in place pending a further review this year. New timetables are available at Walton Library and at www.surreycc.gov.uk/buses.
- The County Council is to carry out an **on-street parking review** in Walton later this year. More information and updates can be found at www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/local-parking-news-and-updates/parking-news-and-updates-in-elbridge.